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EXHIBITION

OF

DESIGNS

AND

ENGRAVINGS

FOR THE

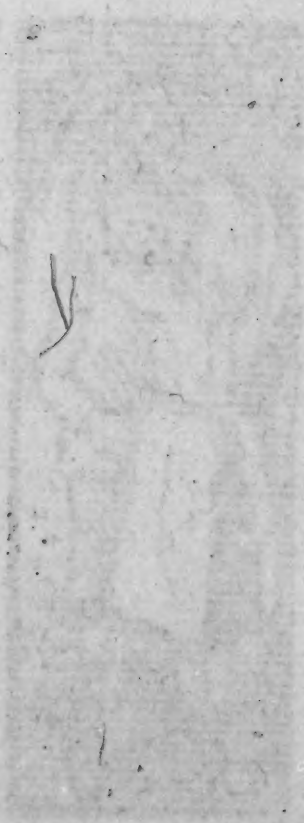
ERAGNY

PRESS

1894–1914

THE ARTS COUNCIL

OF GREAT BRITAIN



On the cover: Illustration from *The Queen of the Fishes* (See No. 68)

FOREWORD

THE Arts Council wishes to record its gratitude to Mrs. Lucien Pissarro for so generously lending these drawings and prints for an extended period so that they may be widely shown in the British Isles, and also to thank her and her daughter Orovida for their willing help in providing information for inclusion in the catalogue.

The Introduction is reprinted from the Catalogue of Part II of the Memorial Exhibition of works from the Eragny Press held at the Leicester Galleries, London, in December 1927.

The following publications contain information relevant to the work of Lucien Pissarro and the Eragny Press:

T. Sturge Moore: *A Brief Account of the Origin of the Eragny Press*, London, 1903.

Robert Steele: *The Revival of Printing*, The Academy, London, October 1911–March 1912.

G. S. Tomkinson: *A Select Bibliography of the Principal Modern Presses, Public and Private, in Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1928.

Camille Pissarro: *Letters to his son Lucien*, London, 1943.

Brian Robb: 'The Wood-Engravings of Lucien Pissarro', *Signature*, New Series No. 6, London, 1948.

John Rewald: 'Lucien Pissarro: Letters from London, 1883–1891', *The Burlington Magazine*, London, July 1949.

La Gardeuse d'oies (No. 64)

INTRODUCTION

In these days when austerity tends to be regarded as a virtue in itself and when the preservation of standards is threatened by the very standardization that deadens man's life and work, this exhibition is both a challenge and a reminder. It is a challenge to artists and craftsmen, and the public alike, that in the arts they should be adamant in their refusal to accept the lowest common denominator, the averagely good, the not so bad. This exhibition is a reminder that others in their day have given practical expression to their protest against prevailing ugliness, and it convinces one that the hand-made book, or pot, or cloth, even if it now takes on the appearance of a laboratory specimen, will always have a place and purpose in an age of rapidly increasing mechanization.

The artist-craftsmen-printers of the nineties, led by Morris, Ricketts and Pissarro did just this. They found contemporary printing distasteful, so they set about printing, not manifestos of protest, but a whole series of exquisite books which, however, were far more important for the stimulus they gave towards a return to decency in commercial printing than for their own virtues as books, however desirable and charming they may be. This is no belittlement of these admirable idealists, who felt, in Ricketts's words, that 'unity, harmony, such are the essentials of fine book building. . . . A work of art is a whole in which each portion is exquisite in itself yet co-ordinate.' And here lies the real service of the private presses, in their insistence that this wholeness and harmony be secured through personal control of the whole book in all its parts. It was from this practice, enabling one man to conceive the general design, choose the appropriate type-face, paper, ink and binding and blend all these

ingredients with any decorations or illustrations, that sprang the present race of 'typographers', who, in our generation, have had such a spectacular effect on machine-printing.

Lucien Pissarro was of all the private printers the most rigorous in his control of operations. He designed and executed the whole sequence of type, decoration, illustration and binding, thus dispensing with the intervention of a professional wood-engraver such as had been employed even by Morris and Burne-Jones.

It was perhaps natural that the outstanding quality of the Eragny books—this name given to the press was that of the family home in Normandy—produced by the son of Camille Pissarro and one reared in the atmosphere of impressionism, should be an extraordinarily sensitive and subtle use of colour. A wide range of tonal qualities was obtained often with the use of only two colours, and sometimes, as in *La Charrue d'Erable*, by different tones of the same colour in the manner of the old *camaïeu*. Here the cuts designed by Camille and printed in this manner were particularly successful, and the chapter-heading and initial letters were deliberately designed by Lucien to suit his father's style. To be quite accurate, it should be said that the woodcuts in this book were designed first and then the text was commissioned by a French society of bibliophiles, *Le Livre Contemporain*, to be written round the illustrations. While such a practice reflects the glorification of the illustrations at the expense of other parts of the book in which French publishers of *éditions de luxe* indulge to this day, Pissarro never allowed his obvious interests in illustration to upset the unity of his books. He even dared sometimes, and with success, to knit his coloured woodcuts to the letter-press by printing the text not only in the traditional combination of black and red

but in a lovely green and grey. A few of the books are also enriched by a discreet use of gold; powder in the case of Perrault's *La belle au bois dormant*, and full gold leaf in Judith Gautier's edition of poems from *Le Livre du Jade*, where a technique of printing in colour on top of the gold was used with great skill. In another book, de Nerval's *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*, this richness reached its climax as the book was commissioned without any financial limitations by the society *Les Cent Bibliophiles*. Here Pissarro was able to give full play to his invention.

Pissarro also had an admirable sense of scale in his books. Not for him were the large lap or table-books favoured by the French publishers of the period. His largest work, the *Areopagitica*, is only a small quarto and most of his books are octavos and duodecimos, or are in an even smaller format. A favourite double opening in place of a title-page, with text printed in capitals and surrounded by his charming floral borders, gives weight to these small volumes and a rare dignity, too. Each book has its own flowered or patterned cover paper derived from a direct and loving observation of nature. One must also record the special beauty of his music used with such effect, and in a manner forgotten in this country since the days of Wynken de Worde, in the French and English *Ballads* and in the *Songs by Ben Jonson*.

The press was started in 1894, but Pissarro had previously printed two portfolios of woodcuts, the second of which, *Les Travaux des Champs* (1893), contained six subjects designed and drawn on the wood by Camille. He made several other separate prints, notably *Les Lavandières* in colour for Vollard, and the *Roses d'antan* (1896), done for the magazine *L'Image*, one of the many ephemeral periodicals in which this period was so rich.

With the exception of *The Queen of the Fishes*, the first book from the Eragny Press, the text of which was handwritten and reproduced by process, the first sixteen volumes were printed in Ricketts's Vale type and published by the Vale Press. For the remaining sixteen books, issued between 1903 and 1914, Pissarro designed his own 'Brook' type. Two charming trifles done after the closing of the press were the devices for Van Royen's Zilverdistel and Kunera Presses. But the enduring value of his work lies in his complete success in subordinating his texts and lay-outs to his special flair for colour in decoration and illustration. Such gaiety and exuberance may leave the purist cold; but there will be many who are grateful for this little gleam of pageantry in print which warms and cheers our present bleakness.

PHILIP JAMES

CATALOGUE

✣ DRAWINGS ✣

1. LES LAVANDIÈRES. 1897

   $9\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pen, indian ink and gouache on green paper. Signed with monogram. This drawing was used for the engraving (No. 30).

2. SEATED FIGURE

   $5\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$ in. Pen and indian ink heightened with white. This drawing was used for the engraving (No. 35).

3. SALOMÉ

   $6\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Pen and brush and indian ink on red chalk outline.

   This design was subsequently modified, see engraving (No. 31).

4. Border for projected book *Daphnis and Chloe*.
   Page size, $9\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ in. Indian ink with white.
   Signed with monogram.

5. Two drawings and engravings, illustrations for *Ivresse d'Amour* and *Chant des Oiseaux le Soir* from *Poèmes tirés du Livre de Jade*, by Judith Gautier, Brook type, 1911.
   Diameter $2\frac{5}{8}$ in. each. Pencil, water-colour and pen.

6. Three drawings by Camille Pissarro for *Daphnis and Chloe*, with the engravings from these drawings by Lucien Pissarro.

   From left (i) Daphnis and Chloe, (ii) The Vintage, (iii) The Procession with Torches.

   Printed (i) and (ii) 1899, (iii) 1920.

   Approx. $4\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$ in. each. Pen and ink with white.

7. NINI. *c.* 1880
   $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{7}{8}$ in.
   One of Lucien Pissarro's earliest engravings, made at Eragny, and showing the influence of Keene.

8. Illustration for *Maître Liziard*, by O. Mirabeau, published in the *Revue Illustrée*, 1886.
   $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.

9. Illustration for *Maître Liziard*. (See No. 8.)
   $5\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in.

10. AU CAFÉ CONCERT
    $4 \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

11. LA CUEILLE DES POMMES, printed in 1889 and published in First Portfolio.
    $6\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ in. Printed in colour.

12. LITTLE MAY, published in First Portfolio, 1889.
    $3\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in. Printed in four colours.

13. JEUNE FILLE. 1889
    $7 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.

14. SISTER OF THE WOOD, published in *The Dial*, 1891.
    $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in.

15. RABBITS, drawn by Lucien Pissarro, engraved by Esther Pissarro, for a New Year card, 1892.
    $3\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$ in.
    This was Esther Pissarro's first engraving.

16. LA RONDE
    Signed and dated 1893. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ in.

17. LES GARDEUSES DE VACHES, drawn by Camille Pissarro and engraved by Lucien Pissarro, published in the portfolio *Les Travaux des Champs*, 1893. (See also Nos. 18 to 22.)
$4\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ in.

18. LE LABOUR, drawing by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. (See No. 17.)
$4\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ in.

19. TRAVAUX DES CHAMPS, drawn by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. (See No. 17.)
$8 \times 6\frac{5}{8}$ in.

20. LA FEMME AUX POULES, drawn by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. (See No. 17.)
$5\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in. Printed in colour.

21. LES SARCLEUSES, drawn by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. (See No. 17.)
$6\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in. Printed in colour.

22. FEMMES FAISANT DE L'HERBE, drawn by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. (See No. 17.)
$7 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.

23. Two illustrations from *The Queen of the Fishes*, 1894. (See No. 68.)
Top: 2×3 in.; *bottom:* $2\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ in. Printed in colour.

24. Illustration for *The Queen of the Fishes*, 1894. (See No. 68.)
$2\frac{3}{4} \times 2$ in.

25. RUTH AND NAOMI, from the *Book of Ruth and Esther*, Vale type, 1896. (See Nos. 26 to 29.)
$3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in.

26. RUTH GLEANING. (See No. 25.)
3 × 2½ in.

27. REAPERS RESTING. (See No. 25.)
3 × 2⅛ in.

28. THE ELDERS. (See No. 25.)
3 × 2⅛ in.

29. THE CROWNING OF ESTHER. (See No. 25.)
3 × 2⅛ in.

30. LES LAVANDIÈRES, published by Vollard. (See No. 1.) Dated 1897.
9⅛ × 4⅛ in. Printed in four colours.

31. SALOMÉ, illustration for *Moralités Légendaires*, Vol. I, by J. Laforgues, Vale type, 1897. (See No. 3.)
7⅞ × 4⅞ in.

32. OPHELIA, illustration for *Moralités Légendaires*, Vol. II, by J. Laforgues, Vale type, 1898.
7⅛ × 4⅛ in.

33. LES OIES, illustration for *Deux Contes de ma Mère Loye*. Vale type, 1899.
Diameter 2⅞ in.
There is a second version of this engraving with a border.

34. ERAGNY PRESS DEVICE
First state, 1899. Diameter 3 in.
The motto was removed in the second state at the request of John Lane.

35. SEATED FIGURE. (See No. 2.) 1899
6 × 3⅛ in.

36. *Top left:* RED RIDING HOOD
4⅜ × 3⅛ in.
Published in *The Dial* and later in *Deux Contes de ma Mère Loye* by Charles Perrault, Vale type, 1899.
Top right: SOLITUDE
3½ × 2⅞ in.
Published in *The Dial*, 1891.
Below: Two pages of *La belle au bois dormant*, from *Deux Contes de ma Mère Loye*.
Page size, 7¼ × 4¾ in. Printed in gold and grey-green.

37. Wood-engraving by Lucien Pissarro from an etching by Degas.
3½ × 3¼ in.

38. LES REGRETS DE LA BELLE HEAULMIÈRE, illustration for *Ballades de François Villon*, Vale type, 1900.
Diameter 2⅞ in.

39. Illustration for *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis* from *Les Ballades de Maistre François Villon*, Vale type, 1900. (See No. 69.)
Diameter 2⅞ in.

40. LA LÉGENDE DE ST. JULIEN, illustration for *Légende de St. Julien l'Hospitalier*, by G. Flaubert, Vale type, 1900.
Diameter 3½ in. Printed on Japanese paper.

41. SALOMÉ, illustration for *Hérodias*, by G. Flaubert, Vale type, 1901.

$2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in.

42. SALOMÉ, illustration for *Herodias*.

$2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in.

43. OF GARDENS, illustration for *Of Gardens*, by Francis Bacon, Vale type, 1902.

Diameter $2\frac{7}{8}$ in.

44. CHRISTABEL, from *Christabel*, . . . by S. T. Coleridge, Brook type, 1904. (See No. 70.)

Diameter $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. Printed in two colours.

45. Initial from *Verses by Christina Rossetti*, Brook type, 1906.

$2\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in.

46. (i) THE RAILWAY LINE. 1906

$6\frac{1}{4} \times 9$ in. Printed in four colours.

(ii) THE RAILWAY LINE IN WINTER

Printed in three colours.

47. Roundel from *Songs by Ben Jonson*, Brook type, 1906. (See No. 71.) Diameter $3\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Initial letter from *Riquet à la Houppe*.

$3\frac{3}{4} \times 3$ in. Printed in colour.

48. Roundel and initial letter, from *Riquet à la Houppe*, Brook type, 1907.

Roundel, diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.; initial $4\frac{7}{8} \times 3$ in. Printed in colour.

49. Book-plate, engraved for J. M. Andrieni, a member of the American Book-Plate Society. 1907.

3 × 3⅞ in.

50. Four initial letters and frontispiece from *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*, by Gérard de Nerval, Brook type, 1907, printed for the *Cent Bibliophiles*.

Printed in gold and colour.

Three ornaments, from *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

Printed in green.

51. LA PROCESSION, illustration for *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

2½ × 2¾ in.

52. CONSULTATION, illustration for *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

Diameter 3¼ in.

53. Seven initial letters and one ornament from *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

Printed in gold and colour.

54. Eight engravings, illustrations for *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

Printed in grey-green.

55. Eight engravings, illustrations for *Histoire de Soliman et de la Reine du Matin*. (See No. 50.)

2½ × 2¾ in. approx. Printed in grey-green.

56. PRINTEMPS, designed by Camille Pissarro and engraved by Lucien Pissarro.

$6\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Printed in light brown in preparation for colour.

57. PORTEUSES DE FAGOTS, drawing by Camille Pissarro, engraved by Lucien Pissarro. 1908.

$4\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

58. SOLIMAN AND BALKIS, published in *Estrange Nouvelle*, 1910.

$5\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ in. Printed in gold and colour.

59. Seven roundels from *Poèmes tirés du Livre de Jade*, by Judith Gautier, Brook type, 1911.

Diameter $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. each. Printed in gold and colour.

60. Initial letter and tail-piece from *Poèmes tirés du Livre de Jade*.

Initial, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2$ in.; tail-piece, diameter $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. Printed in gold and colour, and in colour.

61. LA FILLE AUX CANARDS, for a Christmas card, 1912.

$3\frac{3}{4} \times 2$ in.

62. LANDSCAPE, BLACKPOOL, DEVONSHIRE. 1914

$3\frac{1}{8} \times 3$ in.

63. KUNERA PRESS MARK

Dated 1922. Diameter $3\frac{3}{4}$ in.

This press mark was designed for the Dutch printer, Van Royen.

64. LA GARDEUSE D'OIES. 1923

Diameter 4 in.

65. ON THE LAWN. *c.* 1925
3 × 3 in.

66. POINT DE COUGOUSSA. 1927
3 × 3 in.
Cougoussa is in the South of France.

67. LA BERGÈRE. 1929
3 × 2⅞ in.

✣ BOOKS ✣

68. THE QUEEN OF THE FISHES. An adaptation in English of a fairy tale of Valois, by Margaret Rust. Published by Ch. Ricketts, Chelsea, 1894, and printed by Lucien Pissarro at the Eragny Press in Epping. With illustrations designed on the wood, cut and printed by Lucien Pissarro.

69. LES BALLADES DE MAISTRE FRANÇOIS VILLON. Published by Hacon and Ricketts, London, 1900. Printed at the Eragny Press, Hammersmith. Frontispiece, borders and initial letters designed by Lucien Pissarro, and engraved by Lucien and Esther Pissarro.

70. CHRISTABEL, KUBLA KHAN, FANCY IN NUBIBUS and SONGS FROM ZAPOLYA, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Eragny Press, Hammersmith, 1904. Frontispiece, borders and initial letters designed by Lucien Pissarro, and engraved by Lucien and Esther Pissarro.

71. SONGS BY BEN JONSON. A selection from the Plays, Masques and Poems, with the earliest known settings of certain numbers. Eragny Press, Hammersmith, 1906. Frontispiece, borders and initial letters designed by Lucien Pissarro, and engraved by Lucien and Esther Pissarro.

72. Three sets of designs for initial letters. Pen and indian ink and white.

Printed at The Curwen Press, Plaistow, E.13